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AUTHOR Catalano, Anthony; Tillie, Della
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ABSTRACT

The research project described here explored the complexity of the relationships in a group supervision model of teacher education, focusing on the empowerment of teachers as confirmed by their involvement, collegiality, and reflection. The theoretical frameworks informing the project were: the concept of connectedness as described in feminist pedagogy; power relations as defined in critical and feminist theory; and relational theories from the fields of counseling and education. The research project was qualitative in design and used the following as data sources: weekly dialogue journals; audiotaped transcripts of weekly seminars; regular classroom observations; supervisors' journals; notes and videotapes of meetings; personal educational history interviews; questionnaires; and participants' responses on institutional evaluation instruments. The potentially problematic relationship of power and involvement was approached from a feminist perspective of connectedness using L. Penman's (1980) schema on power and involvement relationships as a framework for analysis and discussion. Case studies of four student teachers and the supervisory methods used with each supported and extended earlier research. Findings showed an increased level of participation among the students, a higher level of discourse in their interactions, increased degrees of intragroup consultation, and a greater understanding of themselves as teachers. (AMH)

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# POWER AND INVOLVEMENT IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

Anthony Catalano
Division of Teacher Education
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

Della Tillie
Division of Counseling and
Educational Psychology
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

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## Power and Involvement in Pre-Service Teacher Education

### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the complexity of the relationships in a group supervision model of teacher education, focusing on the empowerment of teachers as confirmed by their involvement, collegiality and reflection.

This paper describes a group supervision project for pre-service teacher education, examines the development of four pre-service teachers in a supervisory relationship on a power and involvement matrix.

Emergent issues included the role of gender in the process, the development of personal and professional relationships among the participants, the development of an environment conducive to professional growth over utilitarian skill competencies, evaluation in a collegial style, and understanding the impact of the relationship between the supervisors. Embedded in all these issues is the interplay of power and involvement.

Current paradigms of supervision in pre-service teacher education have been criticized and challenged from many quarters. These criticisms have centered around the role of Clinical Supervision (Davidman, 1985; Smyth, 1984), the relationships between pre-service teachers and supervisors (Slack, P.J., 1990), as well as the conceptualization and operationalization of power within the relationships (Holloway, et al., 1989; Holloway, 1990; Dunlap and Goldman, 1990; Collay, 1990).

New models and research are necessary to meet the demands on new teachers (Alfonso and Firth, 1990) and new programs. Research into teacher culture suggests that the isolation and inability of teachers to reflect on their practice presents a barrier to professional development and to

respect for teaching as a profession (Erickson, 1986; Feiman-Nemsar and Floden, 1987; Lortie, 1975; Metz, 1986).

**Theoretical Framework**

Three theoretical frameworks inform our project. First is the concept of connectedness as described in feminist pedagogy; second is power relations as defined in critical theory and feminist theory; and third are relational theories from the fields of counseling and education.

Connectedness can be characterized as interdependence of thought and belief, " a web of existence" (Shrewsbury, 1987; Munro, 1990). Involvement, from the perspective of this study, is characterized by an additional element "personalness" present in the web.

Power relations, as interpreted in critical theory, are concerned with race, class, gender and the role education systems play in reproducing the status quo (McLaren, 1989; Ginzburg, 1988; and Dunlap and Goldman (1990). Feminist theory defines power in terms of community and, again, connectedness (Dunlap, 1990; Munro, 1990; Shrewsbury, 1987); empowerment is the intent of teaching from a feminist perspective.

Relational education has multiple interpretations. According to Proudfoot (1990), relational education is characterized by the synergy of relations between and among teachers/learners, the socio-historical-political-cultural environment and their cultural perspectives; Zeichner and Liston (1987) focus on the relationship between school and society and the development of 'moral craftspersonship' in teaching in their interpretation of relational education. Process-oriented counseling uses the development of a counseling relationship as the environment for change (Teybor, 1988); Watzlawick, et al. (1974) provides a framework for the understanding of change within systems.

What could be simply an overseeing or an evaluative process, a very narrow view of supervision, changes when the individuals involved are connected in a real way. This connectedness is consideration or involvement with the learner and is what turns knowledge into learning, an active process dependent on the communication between the persons involved in the relationship.

**Our Involvement**

What follows are perspectives from each of us chronicling the development of our involvement in this project.

**Della Reflects**

So how did all of this come about? I remember the first tentative teaming situations I had in teaching and how risky they were to start, kind of like exposing one's fears about incompetency. But I liked working with someone else. I remember my last teaching situation, a team situation with Jo. I loved having someone to work with and there was always something to look forward to every day. I wasn't alone. Even now, I ache as I think that I gave this up to go back to University. Things were so good for me as a teacher. How could I leave?

I had never realized how lonely I was in the classroom and how isolated and worried I could make myself before having a team partner. Any time another person came into the classroom my energy level leaped. No wonder I had volunteers and looked forward to student teaching rounds from the University. And here I thought that I chose to work with student teachers because I believed that we have a professional obligation to take part in the training of future teachers. And selfishly, I want to know what my next door neighbor is doing. I feel really protective of the students I teach and I want others to feel that importance, that sense of commitment.

Supervising student teachers was a way in which I might be able to ensure quality in the profession. Now I realize that I also liked having someone around and it was *one of the only ways I took time to explore my own professional development.*

I guess the other key piece of this is that I knew and believed that learning happened because I was connected to the kids. Every time I got a new student teacher we worked more on making relationships work, ours, and theirs with the kids, than we ever did on curriculum requirements. I felt stronger about how I taught and what I believed when there was another adult around for me to relate to. All of this mixes into the pot and I came out vowing not to be alone again, to be part of a team, to stay connected with my colleagues.

This interest in connectedness led me to Counseling Psychology and my arrival at the University of Oregon in 1988. I wanted to be more involved in that part of the learning and growing process. It was here that I got to be the supervisee and to feel all the vulnerability and uncertainty of that position. I was fortunate to have supervisors who were interested in me and my growth. They formed a personal relationship with me and listened and encouraged me as I wrestled with new challenges. They created an environment for me to learn in. Wow! This was what I tried to do as a teacher and as a supervisor of teachers. Maybe I wasn't so off track. Maybe I really wasn't so alone in my ideas and nurturance of relationship!

Now somewhere in my own process, the pragmatic me took over and looked to finances as a student. This led me to the Teacher Education department at the University of Oregon, where I excitedly joined the supervisor ranks. I had managed to stay out of schools for 3 months. (oh

well) Once a teacher!..(and here was something I knew how to do unlike my fledgling attempts in counseling!) Within a month, I found myself wallowing once again in isolationism and doubt. The system didn't seem set up for the personal contact I had experienced as a co-operating teacher in Calgary. I felt distant from my students and wondered how they felt about this unknown alien weekly visitor who held all the power to approve or disapprove of their work. Little did they know how unsure I could feel, not about what I had to say about their technical work, but how to let them hear in such a way that they could learn and grow. All I really knew was that this really wasn't the best learning experience for any of us.

In all of this, I became more sure of my beliefs about what was important in teaching and learning, that the learning environment was the relationship with the learner, that Maslow's hierarchy of needs was right and that modeling is the ultimate expression of the golden rule. Teaching isn't something that happens to people, it's a process between people.

So when I became involved in a research team that looked at power and process and how learning can happen in the supervisory relationship, I thought things were getting better. I figured I could make it supervising because I had a place to check in and look at my process as a supervisor. Shades of deja vu.

Enter Tony. We had met in the Spring of 89 and I was really interested in what he had set up for himself as a supervisor. More time with the students by having his supervisees in the same school, a group time for these students to meet, and the use of reflective journals. Now THIS was more like the kind of supervision I was used to as both a co-operating teacher AND as a Counseling Psychology student.

In what seemed like a very short time, and with the encouragement and help of our research team, the joint supervision project got underway...

**Tony Catalano**

As a cooperating teacher I realized the need for establishing a relationship with student teachers; working with someone closely, releasing 'my kids' to the care of a stranger, having time set aside to talk and write about the teaching/learning process, amounted to a professional marriage. An atmosphere of trust, support, constructive confrontation, and understanding was essential to effectively share the power of teaching with a pre-service professional.

In order to provide more focused direction I enrolled in supervision classes at the local university. There I learned the techniques of clinical supervision, various methods of observing student and teacher behavior, the importance of communication skills, and how to analyze the professional development of teachers (Johnson, personal communications, 1987). I practiced these skills and newly-acquired perspectives with two student teachers and felt inspired to continue my education with the goal of working full-time with pre-service teachers.

Enrolment in the University of Oregon Teacher Education doctoral program the following fall led me to supervising pre-service teachers and first-year teachers in two different programs. The latter program, Resident Teacher Master's Program, afforded me greater personal and professional satisfaction because I spent six-eight hours each week for the entire school year with my supervisee. I assisted her in lesson planning, modeled lessons, conducted observations, videotaped and helped her

analyze her lessons, consulted with her principal, and helped her with the synthesis paper.

The pre-service program consisted of four terms of study and included three practicum experiences and one term concentrating exclusively on coursework. As a supervisor in the pre-service program, I found myself restricted by the structure of the process: an expectation of only 6-8 one-hour visits. The focus was on technical teaching skills and I hardly got to know the pre-service teachers, the elementary students or cooperating teachers. After one term, I decided to alter my supervisory duties to fit my instincts and what was rapidly becoming clear through research and experience: that a strong, long-term relationship is beneficial to professional and personal growth.

After consulting with my advisor, I approached the coordinator of field experience and received permission to modify my approach with the caveat that I remain within the requirements of the University. With the help of my fellow supervisors, I orchestrated my assignments so that my four students were at the same public school. Two students were in their last practicum, one in her first, and another in her second. The five of us met before the term began and I outlined my proposal: that we meet an additional hour each week as a team to discuss our experiences, journalize on a regular basis, observe in each other's classrooms and consult with each other. The coordinator agreed to offer additional credit to practicum students who participated in exchange for the additional hour per week, and the students enthusiastically agreed to work together. The students rated the experience highly on University evaluations and indicated they would like to continue working together during further practica. I repeated

the process with three new and one returning student during the Spring 1989 term and again the response was positive.

The 1989-90 academic year offered another step in the process: that of instructing a required course in teaching strategies for pre-service teachers. At the end of the term, I asked for volunteers to participate in a study that would include supervision in a collegial, reflective context. I selected those who were assigned to middle school settings. This decision was based upon their expressed concern that the program wasn't preparing them adequately for middle school; I felt they would benefit from additional support.

During the summer of 1989, I learned of a year-long seminar co-sponsored by faculty in educational administration and counseling psychology. The seminar was titled "Power and Process in Supervision" and was to be focusing on the relationships of the supervisors and supervisees from a perspective of power and involvement. At the suggestion of one of the seminar leaders, I enrolled for the fall term. There I became more acquainted with Della Tillie, who I knew as a supervisor, and discovered that our orientations, commitments to kids, our professions, and to improvement of teacher education were in synch. As discussion of power and process unfolded, we decided to share a supervisory experience and collaborated on development and implementation of this project.

**Methodological Design and Data Source**

The research project was qualitative in design and utilized the following as data sources:

- weekly dialogue journals,
- audiotaped transcripts of weekly seminars,

- regular classroom observations,
- supervisors' journals and notes and videotapes of meetings,
- personal educational history interviews,
- questionaires, and
- participants' responses on institutional evaluation instruments.

Interpretation of the data sources was affected by the perspectives of the gender-balanced, multi-disciplinary supervisory team.

The participants agreed to participate in the study, earning graduate level credit in reflective teaching.

Each preservice teacher was observed at least 6 times during their practicum experience and participated in 10 seminars each term for two consecutive terms. Classroom observations focused on application of teaching skills and attitudes gleaned from group seminar discussions and interaction. Also, preservice teachers began to contribute items to the agenda midway in the project, something we see as an important component of an empowerment model.

Due to the dynamic nature of the group supervision process, a case study approach was deemed most appropriate. As the study developed, the relationship of power and involvement emerged as a dominant theme. Due to the development of this "micro-process" within the project we were challenged to look at the project from alternative perspectives.

Observing and reflecting on pre-service teacher interactions with each other and the supervisors, with their students, and in conjunction with their personal journal reflections, provided us with raw material for interpretation. We chose four pre-service teachers to provide diversity in gender, age, and grade level to further explore this area. Using the Penman matrix of power and involvement, we placed each of the four

according to their interactional style over a period of six months and will discuss the effects of these styles on the group supervision process.

**The Process of the Group Supervision Project**

This group supervision project encompasses the following components:

- collaborative supervision;
- weekly group seminars and observations;
- dialogue journal writing;
- evaluation.

In order to more fully serve the diverse needs of the pre-service teachers, two supervisors shared responsibility; in this situation there were one male and one female supervisor. The co-supervisors offered different perspectives and different areas of strength in the teaching process. In any context of this type, supervisory teams balanced by ethnicity, gender, exceptionality is essential. The multiplicity of voices and perspectives cannot be overemphasized: issues of gender, power, and culture are implicit in the teaching/learning process and acknowledging their presence and importance enhances the understanding of the complexities of teaching. It is important to emphasize that the supervisors engaged in the same activities as the pre-service teachers. The supervisors met weekly to reflect and plan as well as exchange dialogue journals. We modeled the collaborative process and used our research group to provide consultation and support.

We provided a framework for seminars which included check-in time, concerns and instructional requests. The pre-service teachers were encouraged to openly share concerns, successes, questions, etc., with each other and the supervisors. Often, the seminar agendas became determined

by the content of the check-ins. We arranged observation schedules according to pre-service teacher's needs as determined by supervisors. For example, we had identified organizational skills as a primary need of one student and scheduled additional observation and conference time with that pre-service teacher. Another pre-service teacher required additional help developing interpersonal skills and met with us in informal settings. Pre-service teachers also self-identified areas of concern and initiated additional supervision time.

Another important aspect of the process was reflective dialogue journal writing. Reflection, as practiced by journal-writing, promotes the development of a critical perspective in the teachers (Yinger and Clark, Erickson, Schon). Supervision included weekly exchanges of journals between supervisors and pre-service teachers. Questions were answered, perceptions checked, concerns addressed, and personal-interaction dialogue ensued. Pre-service teachers often wrote vignettes capturing classroom experiences or interactions with cooperating teachers and/or students. These vignettes also provided a foundation for seminar discussions and a sharing of possible solutions to problems.

In this project, the supervisors begin with the assumption that the pre-service teachers would pass the practicum. This assumption was based on the rigorous and competitive admission process, the fact that the candidate had progressed to the practicum level. Assuming a 'pass' grade removed the fear and anxiety candidates had and allowed for fuller expression of personal voice in seminars, journals and observation conferences. Our experience with 'weak' pre-service teachers has allayed the concern that assuming a 'pass' grade could become problematic. We have found that in a collegial setting, with two supervisors involved with

each pre-service teacher, problems were addressed more thoroughly and broadly due to additional documentation and two styles with which to handle the communication. In addition, the written evaluations were constructed to accurately reflect the pre-service teacher's preparedness, e.g., being better-suited to a particular grade level or subject matter, and other combinations of personal and professional growth.

This approach to 'field experience support', or supervision, necessitates an increased commitment from teacher education institutions, supervisors and beginning teachers.

**Supervision and Power**

The stated goal of Clinical Supervision is to improve teaching and it stresses collaboration, skilled service, ethical conduct, and collegiality as major cornerstones of any strategy likely to succeed in improving teaching. This model was originally conceived as a cycle that addresses ongoing involvement in the supervision process; establishing a relationship, planning with the teacher, planning an observation, observing instruction, analyzing data, planning for the conference, holding the conference, and renewed planning and resumption of the cycle (Cogan, 1973, Goldhammer, 1969). This model has suffered due to institutional constraints such as time, staffing, contractual agreements and other realities of public school culture. It has been criticized for its application in pre-service teacher education, a setting in which collegiality meets head-on with the tradition of authoritarianism in terms of knowledge, responsibility, experience, evaluation, and territory (Davidman, 1985). Another criticism is geared toward the process orientation and focus of supervision in that it is not initiated by the pre-service teacher (Davidman, 1985).

Experience has indicated that working as a supervisor who commits time for observations/feedback, meetings/ discussions, and co-planning can result in a more satisfying field experience for the pre-service teacher (Catalano, unpublished). The commitment of the supervisor, in terms of time, flexibility, availability as well as professionalism appears to affect the pre-service teacher's perception of the field experience (Kagan, 1988).

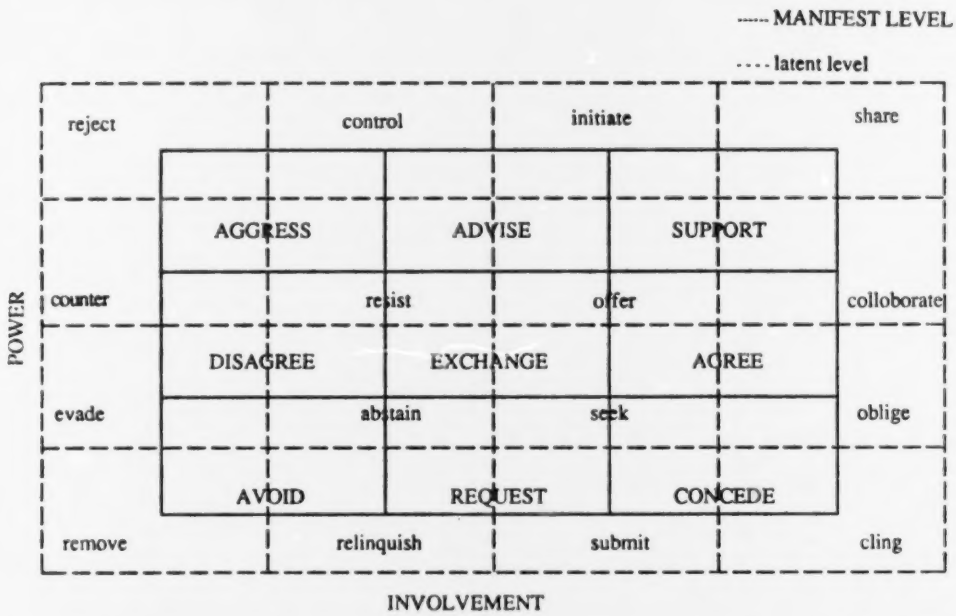
The issue of power is elemental to any discussion of supervision. Dunlap and Goldman (1990) have suggested that power be reconceptualized as a "system of facilitation" as opposed to the current model of power as a "system of authority". They contend that Clinical Supervision has unresolved problems inherent in its construction: its hierarchical nature ("one best knowledge"), the contradictions of the supervisor acting as both coach and judge, that the supervisor is not necessarily familiar with good classroom strategies, and the conceptualization of power as authority in making summary judgements. In their view, conceptualizing power-as-facilitation would include

- decentralizing and enlarge decision-making processes, and
- encouraging non-standardized approaches and solutions to problems.

French and Raven (1959) describe power as having five bases: reward, coercive, legitimate, expert and referent. It appears clear to us that while reward, coercive and legitimate power are institutionally-imposed, expert and referent power are relationship-based. Supervisors hold legitimate power and could restrict engagement to reward/coercive power interactions (noninvolvement); however, by establishing a working alliance, expert and referent power can be experienced through a collegial, collaborative format (involvement/connectedness). If, as Dunlap and

Goldman suggest, professional knowledge is a "realized act of shared values that involves both specialized knowledge and personal influence", then autonomy, the concept of autonomy, both professional and personal would also need to be rethought. Adopting a feminist perspective of connectedness, as illustrated most clearly by Shrewsbury (1987) and Belenky, et al. (1985) appears to be the best solution to the problem. Feminist perspectives allow for the inclusion of personal expression and feelings (Munro, 1990) and can provide options for supervision that go unused because of more technically-based perspectives.

Penman's (1980) scheme, and its adaptation in Holloway, et al. (1989), provides a framework for analysis and discussion of power and involvement perspective. In this scheme there exists latent and manifest levels of power and involvement. Figure 1 below shows the integration of the manifest and latent-levels of the Penman classification scheme.




The integration of the manifest and latent levels of the Penman (1980) classification scheme. (From *Communication Processes and Relationships* [p.67] by Robyn Penman, 1980. London, Academic Press.)

In our application of Penman four participants were selected because each shows differing degrees of power and involvement.

PST 1: The relationship was characterized by high power and high involvement. This pre-service teacher demonstrated a high degree of self-awareness, self-direction, and confidence. She was a leader within the group, described herself as a 'consultant' and became an active partner in the supervision process. In one instance, for example, during a videotape viewing of another pst's lesson, she adroitly assessed the management difficulty her colleague was experiencing and framed her response in a supportive manner and was able to confront her peer's need to be more consistent in the classroom. She repeatedly demonstrated her ability to rephrase and hone in on the concerns expressed by her peers. Her high power and high involvement includes high interest and a positive attitude that brought energy to the group, as it did to her classroom. In addition, she was quickly recognized by the staff of her placement school as a 'real ' teacher and treated as such from early in the practicum. She was an excellent self-supervisor and initiated interactions both orally and in her journal-writing to meet her personal and supervisory needs. Her growth was measured as increased depth as a teacher. As supervisors of a high-power, high-involvement pre-service teacher, we cautioned her to monitor her commitments as we see overinvolvement to be a potential difficulty for this style of teacher.

PST 2: The relationship was characterized by low power and low involvement. This pre-service teacher was reserved, non-communicative, and resistant to consultation. She was often unprepared for observations, forgot dates of meetings, and maintained a distance in both personal interactions and in her journal. There was incongruence between her

stated desire to become a teacher and her teaching behaviors. Her participation in the seminars was minimal; she arrived late and departed early. When confronted with these issues, she became defensive and demanded a specific outside supervisor to provide an 'objective' interpretation of her communication style. She was asked to write only affective responses in her journal and to initiate conversation in the group, and to put more of herself forward in the classrooom. Following this critical juncture, she opened up and met the challenge of changing her personal communication style and her professional demeanor. Her growth was measured by the level of involvement in the project and by observable changes in her manner; the defensiveness diminished and was replaced by a willingness to consult with others. As supervisors of a low-power, low-involvement pre-service teacher, we felt that increasing our involvement was necessary to increase hers.

PST 3, characterized as a low-power, high-involvement person, had major problems due to poor organizational skills complicated by an absence of an understanding of the problem. She exhibited an excessive interpersonal focus characterized by unfocused seeking, submission to any suggestion, obliging without discriminating, and dependence on other professionals for decision-making. She was absolutely delightful to know and eventually expressed concern about her choice of career. This high-involvement style allowed for our influence to be used and accepted. Much time was spent developing technical skills to complement her already-strong relating skills. Her growth was measured in terms of her ability to self-analyze her teaching skills and organize her time and materials. As supervisors of low-power, high-involvement students, our greatest challenge was to maintain a professional distance and not become

overinvolved with her personality. We were able to exercise our expert power to help, thus modelling a higher-powered position.

PST 4 was pershaps the most difficult pre-service teacher to reach. She was a high-power, low-involvement teacher matched with high-involvement supervisors. Her professional decisions were based on a hierarchical power concept of personal benefit. Supervision was used selectively; she rejected and discredited feedback that she did not agree with. In the group her involvement decreased when her peers stopped asking her for advice. Her involvement in the group decreased over time as she maintained her high power profile. Evaluation was an important issue and served to validate her feelings about herself and the program; grades and scores rather than personal development were her criteria for learning. The challenge for the supervisors was to maintain communication. We chose to engage in more frequent joint meetings in order to balance her power position. Her excessive task focus demanded that we work to increase her involvement while respecting her need for control.

**Results and Implications**

The study supported and extended earlier research in collegiality, reflection, and involvement. We observed an increased level of participation among the students, a higher level of discourse in their interactions, increased degrees of intra-group consultation, and a greater understanding of themselves as teachers.

In addition, findings of the study also suggest that the interactional styles to power and involvement manifested by the pre-service teachers affected the communication style and interactions between them and us.

This element emerged as the central outcome of the group supervision project due to the intensity of the relationships of the participants.

We also found that the orientations to power and involvement allowed us to understand the dynamics of the supervisory relationship in a manner that clarified the process. By acknowledging the existence of the power relations and having an understanding of its importance in the supervisory relationship, we were able to more fully address the needs of the pre-service teachers and facilitate collegial interaction and reflection. It was important to recognize and integrate the knowledge and experiences of the participants affecting the development of the process.

Our participation affirmed our beliefs in education as an interactive process between learners/teachers and in the importance of recognizing our own power in this process. In order for preservice teachers to adequately acquire competence in collegial rather than isolating relationships, supervision must include attention to issues of power in the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee.

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